BLACKROCK COLLEGE

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

VISION

Every person in the Blackrock College Community is entitled to participate in an environment free from fear and intimidation. Bullying is not tolerated in Blackrock College. It erodes relationships with God and with others. It undermines the spirit of the College. The school motto '**Be Caring, Be There, Be Truthful'** underpins this Policy.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

Bullying *is deliberate, repeated inappropriate behaviour which undermines a person's right to personal dignity.*

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour whether verbal or written, physical or social, targeting person or property, carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic, or other, medium, which could harm a person or undermine their self-esteem or self-confidence.

Cyber-bullying *is the act of bullying through electronic means.*

It takes place in a variety of ways which include: the posting of hurtful content on Social Networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+ etc.; the sending of abusive text messages and picture messages on a mobile phone; the sending of abusive emails, instant messages, on forums or on message boards; the creation of abusive accounts, pages or groups about someone; the posting of hurtful comments on other websites including Ask.fm or Spill.it.

THE ABOVE LISTS ARE NOT EXHAUSTIVE.

Furthermore, bullying can be related to race, religion, ethnicity, SEN or disabilities, health conditions or appearance, sexual orientation, home circumstances or the traveller community.

In the context of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, September 2013, a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off hurtful text message or other private messaging do not fall within the above definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the College's code of behaviour.

THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE D.E.S 2013 ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE:

a)   A positive school culture and climate.

b)   Effective leadership.

c)   A school-wide approach.

d)   A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

e)   Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness-raising measures).

f)   Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

g)   Supports for staff.

h)   Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).

i)   On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The aims and objectives of the Blackrock College Anti-Bullying Policy are to fulfil the above D.E.S Guidelines.

AIMS OF POLICY

1.   To provide every student and staff member of the Blackrock College Community with an environment that is free from fear and intimidation.

2.   To raise awareness of bullying as an inappropriate and uncaring mode of behaviour.

3.   To ensure that all members of the Blackrock College Community, when aware of a bullying incident, feel comfortable in reporting such incidents.

4.   To ensure that practices and procedures are in place to prevent cyber-bullying.

5.   To put in place a programme of support for (i) those being bullied and (ii) those involved in bullying behaviour.

6.   To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively by following the procedures that are in place.

7.   To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on Anti-Bullying behaviour.

OBJECTIVES

The above aims will be achieved by the following means:

1.   The posting of our Anti-Bullying Statement in all rooms and corridors of the school.

2.   The holding of a Bullying Awareness Day twice a year, usually at the start of both the academic (September) and calendar (January) year. The first day raises awareness

around the issue of Bullying via whole-school engagement, distribution of letters explaining the purpose of the day to students and staff, distribution of wristbands, poster campaigns, classroom lessons, use of T.V. screens in the schools and the reiteration of the College's Bullying Policy. The second day also raises awareness of the issue of bullying as well as promoting active involvement from the students, i.e. students attend talks from visiting speakers, e.g. from Facebook, lunchtime concert, student debates etc.

3. The appointment of a Post of Responsibility-holder, currently Head of Guidance and Counselling, to prepare, oversee and review the Bullying Awareness Days.

4. The re-enforcement of the School Policy by the Deans at Year Assemblies.

5. The vigilance of the Blackrock College community in identifying bullying incidents and initiating interventions when necessary. In this vigilance, we must develop a culture whereby incidents are reported. To this end, there should be an emphasis on the 'Bystander Effect'.

6. The provision of interviews by counsellors for each year group who meet the boys individually to establish a relationship of trust, and provide a confidential support service.

7. The provision of a confidential email support service: tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com for students to inform about bullying incidents.

8. The provision of a report from the Principal to the Board of Management each term on the overall number of bullying cases recorded and confirmation that all cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the 2013 D.E.S procedures.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF A BULLYING INCIDENT

i)   The first point of contact for students/parents/guardians should be the Dean.

ii) The relevant Counsellor should be informed by the Dean about all cases of bullying.

iii) The procedure for dealing with serious disciplinary issues should be applied.

iv) The counselling for both the target of bullying and the transgressor should be applied.

v)   Meetings with parents/guardians should be arranged.

vi) Bullying incidents will be recorded and kept on file.

It is our policy to develop in pupils a willingness to walk away from confrontation and find non-aggressive ways of dealing with problems. We discourage retaliation as it makes the situation worse rather than better.

Pupils should inform a responsible person, e.g. Dean, Counsellor, Teacher, Chaplain, peer etc. of any difficulties so that appropriate action can be taken.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF A CYBER-BULLYING INCIDENT:

i)   Students should NOT reply to any messages or comments made.

ii)   Students should inform someone they trust of what is happening e.g. friend, parent, staff member. Alternatively, students can email: tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com

iii)   Students should keep records of all hurtful comments/texts e.g. screenshots, photos, etc.

iii)   Students should use blocking facilities to prevent the person/group from bullying on Social Networking sites.

iv)   Students should report the cyber-bully(ies) to the Social Network or use Social Reporting.

v)   If the problem persists, it may be necessary for students to delete their account(s).

vi)   Other measures to be taken include those outlined above in 'the measures to be taken in a bullying incident'.

POLICY REVIEW

It is best recommended that the Blackrock College Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed annually as per the recommendation in the 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. The Blackrock College Anti-Bullying Policy was last reviewed and updated in December 2013. The Committee involved in this review and update included Fr. Malachy Kilbride, CSSp., Ms. Carleen McGee, Ms. Mary McMahon, Ms. Siobhan O'Connor and Mr. Niall Toolan in conjunction with the School Management.

CONCLUSION

A whole-school approach to Bullying whereby parents, staff and pupils are vigilant and aware, promotes an environment where all other pupils can be happy in the school community.

The school rules – **Be Caring, Be There, Be Truthful** – underscore this Policy and promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility amongst all members of our community.

We strongly disapprove of vulgar, offensive, sectarian, racist or other abusive behaviour and we actively promote respect for the dignity of the individual, qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding, and an awareness of the interdependence of people in group and community.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility with the school management to act in preventing bullying behaviour by any member of the school community.

APPENDIX 1: TEMPLATE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the **Board of Management of Blackrock College** has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This Policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

2. **The Board of Management** recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is, therefore, fully committed to the following key principles of Best Practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which:
    - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non- threatening environment; and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils

        and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

    and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:
- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying

    and

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or one-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a one-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this Policy, placing a one-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the College's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- Principal

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- The posting of our Anti-Bullying Statement in all rooms and corridors of the school.
- The holding of a Bullying Awareness Day twice a year, usually at the start of both the academic (September) and calendar (January) year.
- The appointment of a Post of Responsibility Holder to prepare, oversee and review the Bullying Awareness Days.
- The re-enforcement of the School Policy by the Deans at Year Assemblies.
- The vigilance of the Blackrock College

6. **The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):**

- The first point of contact for parents/guardians should be the Dean.
- The relevant Counsellor should be informed by the Dean of all cases of bullying

7. **The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):**

- The relevant Counsellor should be informed by the Dean of all cases of bullying.
- Provision of counselling for both the target of bullying and the transgressor should be applied

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision, monitoring policies and practices are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. **This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21-1-2014.**

11. This Policy has been made available to College personnel, published on the College website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this Policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

12. This Policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the **Board of Management** once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to College personnel, published on the College Website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   **Signed:** _____
            Chairperson   **Principal**
            Board of Management

Date: _____   **Date:** _____

Date of next review: _____

APPENDIX 2:
PRACTICAL TIPS FOR BUILDING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.

Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness-raising campaigns around social media.

APPENDIX 3: TEMPLATE FOR RECORDING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group: _____

Class: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report
(tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil Concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents
(tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/ SEN Related	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) **Date:** _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy-Principal: _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

APPENDIX 4: CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review will be required, involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate, across the various elements, of the implementation of the College's Anti-Bullying Policy.

	YES/NO
Has the Board formally adopted an Anti-Bullying Policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the Policy on the College Website and provided a copy to the Parents' Association?	
Has the Board ensured that the Policy has been made available to College staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that College staff are sufficiently familiar with the Policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the Policy and procedures in their day-to-day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the Policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the Policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the College applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the Policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the College is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not, therefore, included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the College's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	

Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the College's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the College's Policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____ **Date** _____

       (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed _____ **Date** _____

       (Principal)

NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT'S ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

TO: _____

The Board of Management of Blackrock College wishes to inform you that:

- **The Board of Management's annual review of the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of** _____ [date].

    This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
        Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
        Principal

APPENDIX 5

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to or from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching;
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about pupils or teachers;
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing;
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

WHEN/WHERE DOES BULLYING HAPPEN?

- On the way to and from school – bus, DART, LUAS, local shops;
- Between classes – toilets, corridors, assembly areas, refectory, church;
- During class – sneering, isolation, interference with books/property;
- After school – changing rooms, showers, pitches;
- All the time - cyber-bullying via social networking sites, online forums, message boards, emails, text messages.

APENDIX 6

For further information please refer to the other policy documents of Blackrock College:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Best Practice – Relationships Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Guidance Policy
- Mission Statement
- Serious Misconduct Policy
- S.E.N Policy
- Student Council Constitution

All of the above policies can be viewed online at:
http://www.blackrockcollege.ie/blackrock/www/index.asp?magpage=24

ANTI-BULLYING AGENCIES - WEBSITES

- http://www.abc.tcd.ie/school.html
- http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/
- http://www.antibullyingireland.com/
- http://www.barnardos.ie
- http://childline.ie
- http://esafety.ie
- http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/
- http://npcpp.ie
- http://www.reachout.com
- http:/www.samaritans.org
- http://www.teenline.ie/
- http://www.webwise.ie/

28 January 2014